

Paschal Law

Jesus reveals in this week's gospel (*John 12:20-33*) nothing less than the secret to life!

"Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24).

Pope Francis calls this: "the Paschal Law – losing life in order to receive it renewed and eternal." (*Vatican 18/3/18*) And what does losing life mean? That is, what does it mean to be the grain of wheat? It means to think less about oneself, about personal interests and to know how to "see" and to meet the needs of our neighbours, especially the least of them.

The world encourages us to devote ourselves to being self-centred and selfish: to being the fastest, smartest, prettiest, strongest, wealthiest, most powerful individual we can be; at the expense of anyone in our path. Jesus' message of self-less-ness is counter-intuitive – but deep down we know he is right. Pope Francis reminds us (*LS204*) that "When people become self-centred and self-enclosed, their greed increases. The emptier a person's heart is, the more he or she needs to buy, own and consume".

Growing and changing, as we yearn to do, will cost. Lent flushes out the pockets where selfishness reigns. "To joyfully carry out [works of charity](#) towards those who suffer in body and spirit is the most authentic way of living the Gospel. It is the necessary foundation upon which our communities can grow in reciprocal fraternity and welcome".

Does it hurt, this little death to myself? Sometimes. Parting with money for Project Compassion until it hurts; quietly taking on extra tasks at home or in the community; curbing our unruly tongue; skipping a favourite activity to spend quality time with an elderly neighbour. But sense the fruitfulness of new life filling your heart!

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